

Disciplinary Action Policy

PURPOSE

The purpose of the disciplinary policy and procedure is to set and maintain standards of conduct within the County, and in doing so, ensure that all employees are treated fairly and consistently. It is designed to help and encourage all employees to achieve and maintain satisfactory standards of conduct. The disciplinary procedure is normally only used where other interventions have failed to produce the required improvement or when the conduct matter is sufficiently serious to require immediate formal action.

The County may apply the concept of progressive discipline. Progressive discipline may include verbal warnings, written reprimands, suspensions with or without pay, and termination of employment. However, the County retains and reserves the discretion to apply any level of disciplinary action and nothing in this policy acts to change or limit the at-will employment relationship.

GUIDELINES

The County expects employees to follow rules and regulations of the County and its Departments. Such rules and regulations are necessary for the orderly and efficient operation of County business. The failure to follow these rules and regulations may result in discipline. Whether to impose any discipline, and if so, the degree of discipline is a discretionary decision which management will make based on the nature of the offense, the employee's history and other facts and circumstances deemed relevant. Whenever a notice of disciplinary action is placed in the personnel file, the employee may respond in writing and have the response included in the personnel file consistent with the Bullard-Plawecki Employee Right to Know Act (MCL 423.501 et seq.).

This policy applies to any and all employee conduct that the County, in its sole discretion, determines must be addressed by discipline. Of course, no discipline policy can be expected to address each and every situation requiring corrective action that may arise in the workplace. Therefore, the County takes a case by case approach regarding discipline and will attempt to consider all relevant factors before making its determination.

Most often, employee conduct that warrants discipline results from unacceptable behavior, poor performance or violation of the County's policies, practices or procedures. However, discipline may be issued for conduct that falls outside of those identified areas. Equally important, the County need not resort to progressive discipline, but may take whatever action it deems necessary to address the issue at hand. This may mean that more or less severe discipline is imposed in a given situation. Likewise, some County policies like sexual harassment and attendance, contain specific discipline procedures.

Progressive discipline may be issued even when the conduct that leads to more serious discipline is not the same that resulted in less severe discipline. That is, violations of different rules may be considered the same as repeated violations of the same rule for purposes of progressive discipline.

The following is a general outline of the disciplinary process:

1. Verbal Warning: An employee will be given a verbal warning when a problem is identified that justifies a verbal warning or the employee engages in unacceptable behavior. Verbal warnings may be documented and placed in the employee's personnel file.

2. Written Warning: A written warning is more serious than a verbal warning. A written warning will be given when an employee engages in conduct that justifies a written warning or the employee engages in unacceptable behavior during the period that a verbal warning is in effect. Written warnings are maintained in an employee's personnel file.

3. Suspension: A suspension without pay is more serious than a written warning. An employee will be suspended when he or she engages in conduct that justifies a suspension or the employee engages in unacceptable behavior during the period that a written warning is in effect. An employee's suspension will be documented and maintained in an employee's personnel file.

4. Termination: An employee will be terminated when he or she engages in conduct that justifies termination or does not correct the matter that resulted in less severe discipline.

Again, while the County may take disciplinary action in a progressive manner, it reserves the right, in its sole discretion, to decide whether and what disciplinary action will be taken in a given situation.

Professional Development Plan

When needed the County utilizes the Professional Development Plan as a method of developing an action plan for meeting the employee's career goals, providing for improved communication and understanding of each other's needs between supervisor and employee, understanding how the employee's job fits the department's strategic plan, and determining skill development needed to do the job more effectively.

Note: This policy may differ for those employees who are members of recognized unions, organizations, or associations. Any questions related to the content of this policy, or its interpretation, should be directed to Human Resources.

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